

Plainfield accepts land offer for new athletic fields

Media Contact:

Karen Cantou Grubbs

Indiana Department of Correction

Communications Chief

(317) 232-5780 (office)

(317) 903-7045 (cell)

kgrubbs@doc.IN.gov

By Lindsay J. Jones

lindsay.jones@flyergroup.com,

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J. David Donahue

Commissioner

PLAINFIELD- At a groundbreaking ceremony Monday morning, about 100 people gathered to celebrate the coming of the new Plainfield Youth Sports Complex. A combination of representatives from the Town of Plainfield, the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC), and the Plainfield Optimist Club came to watch the historical event, eagerly anticipating the new fields, which will replace those currently housed at Lovell Field.

Al Bennett, planning committee chairman, reminisced on when he became superintendent of the former Indiana Boys' School in July of 1969.

He said that during his tenure, the late Joseph Root brought soccer to the Town of Plainfield. And because of Root's significant impact on the sport in the community, the new athletic fields will be dedicated to him. In his honor, there is a plaque on a large rock that reads, "This field is dedicated to Joseph R. Root founder of Plainfield soccer." Root's widow, Jeannine, was present for the dedication.

"This is a day that the Plainfield youth soccer program is getting a boost," Bennett said of the new facility.

Indiana Department of Corrections Commissioner J. David Donahue was also on hand for the ceremony. He formally offered the IDOC land to the Town of Plainfield. Donahue also said that the number of juveniles in the IDOC is down, and they thought it would be a better use of the facility to put the athletic

fields there. He said it was an agreement between state and local government, and read a letter on behalf of Gov. Mitch Daniels.

"As the correctional agency has evolved, we have no need for this space," Donahue said. "Governor Daniels wanted us to be better partners with our community. And it promotes (programs such as) INShape Indiana. We're really excited."

Town Council President Robin Brandgard accepted the offer of the land from Donahue on behalf of the town, saying it will be a "state-of-the-art facility."

Brandgard also congratulated the IDOC on the success of the PREF program, which benefits PREF residents as well as the town.

On behalf of the Plainfield Optimist Club, President Rich Philip expressed the organization's gratitude for the new land, citing enrollment numbers for youth sports. He said that during the last seasons, more than 850 children have been a part of the fall football, soccer, and cheerleading programs, and that more than 600 have been involved in spring soccer and little league baseball.

"We're excited to be at this new location," Philip said.

Philip added that the new Plainfield Youth Sports Complex will be the first facility of its kind to reach out to disabled children, allowing them to participate in the same sports as other children by creating a unique buddy system.

Plainfield Chamber of Commerce President and Town Council Member Kent McPhail gave thanks to all who have been a part of bringing the town and the IDOC together to bring the new athletic fields to the town.

McPhail said he expects construction to begin this fall. He added that the design plans have been created, and are expected to be approved soon.

About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.